1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
FL12 Masai FL12

we have here primitive and undeveloped religious sentiment where the personality of the deity is hardly separated from striking natural phenomena, or remnants of some old cultus of the heavenly bodies, mountains, and tribal deities preserved in a hazy way by a military race which had not paid much attention to religion.

The Masai believe that ordinary persons die like cattle, and they throw away their corpses to be eaten by hyenas[1], in the revoltingly unceremonious way common to many East African tribes. Medicine men, however, and influential people are buried, and their souls are said to pass into snakes, which are respected in consequence. Many tribes on the Nile also reverence snakes. It is noticeable that death and misfortune are not attributed to witchcraft. The Laibon is not the same as the Witch Doctor of the Bantu tribes, and it is no part of his duties to detect witches.

As the Masai men will practically do nothing but fight or tend cattle, they are naturally dependent on others for all articles, including their arms, which cannot be manufactured by women. There is among them a special tribe of smiths, called Il-Kunono, who make iron weapons, but are treated as inferiors and not allowed to marry Masai women. A somewhat similar tribe are the Dorobo or hunters.

It would appear that the military organization, the aversion to hunting, to eating game or vegetable food, and to engaging in agriculture or any productive art are peculiarities specially developed by the Masai, though some of them have been imitated by other tribes. Another peculiarity is the shape of their houses—long low buildings constructed of poles, grass, and mud, and divided into rooms by partitions. Their other customs, however, seem to tally with those of the Latuka, Bari, and Dinka, as far as differences of residence and occupation permit. Remarkable points of agreement are the nudity of the men, the shaven heads of the women, extraction of the middle teeth of the lower jaw, resting in a standing position on one leg, drinking the blood from living animals, and spitting as a sign of affection or benediction.

Linguistic evidence points the same way, though ampler and clearer information about the languages of the Nile is desirable for purposes of comparison. It is no want of respect to the labours of Sir H. Johnston and others to say that the researches of Mr. Hollis have for the first time

[1] It has been suggested that this practice may be due to a desire not to contaminate the earth by burial, but Mr. Hollis could find no trace of this idea, although he carefully inquired.

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
FL12 Masai FL12

* 539

No. 46. Menyanyuk ateleja o atishiraka
They-resemble-not to-cheat and to-do-by-force.

Cheating and doing something by force are not the same.

[If a man has suffered wrong, he had better try and come to an arrangement with his aggressor instead of going to complain to the chiefs, for his enemy will not forget, and will avenge himself later.]

No. 47. Menyanyuk puan o kĭa.
They-resemble-not life and death.

Life and death are not alike.

No. 48. Mĕoki o-inoti 'n-gipa
It-is-not-drunk the-foster-son (*or* the slave) the-vernix-caseosa

ol-ōtisinyunye ake.
the-who-was-without-blemish only.

What does it matter whether a person is one's own child or somebody else's as long as he does his duty?

[The Swahili have a somewhat similar proverb: 'Kheri Kafiri akufaaye kuliko Islam asiyekufaa' (it is better to have a Kaffir who pleases you than a Mahommedan who displeases you).]

No. 49. Mĕoro 'l-tuli o en-gop.
They-separate-not the-buttocks and the-ground.

The buttocks and the ground do not remain long apart.

[One explanation of this proverb is that a man must sit down, and though he may walk about or lie down, he will sit on the ground again later. Another theory is that it has in some way reference to the disposal of the dead. With the exception, however, of the medicine-men and rich people, who are buried in shallow trenches, burial is unknown amongst the Masai. But it is perhaps a remarkable coincidence that the Tavetans[1], who are closely allied to the Masai, and the Bari, Dinka, and Madi[2], who live nearly 1,000 miles away, and not very far from the country whence the ancestors of the Masai are believed to have hailed, bury their dead in a *sitting* posture.]

[766]
[764]

[1] *Ante* p. 221, note 2.

[2] Brun-Rollet (*Le Nil Blanc*, p. 244), Kaufmann (*Schilderungen aus Central-Afrika*, p. 129), Casati (*Ten Years in Equatoria*, p. 208), Emin Pasha (*In Central Africa*, pp. 260, 338, &c.).

[113]

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
FL12 Masai FL12

Naa, ten ĕă en-ginyi-kerai, neitau 'ñgotonye ake 'n-dŏkitin.

If a baby dies, its mother only lays aside her ornaments[1]. 765

Il-tauja oo 'l-menañga[2] loo-'l-tuñganak, oo 'l-asuria.

People's souls and spirits, and snakes[3]. 775

Ten etaa en-nĕă ol-tuñgani, nĕji etaa en-nedunĕgo ol-tau lenye. Naa, ten ĕă ol-tuñgani, ore p' eincsi, nĕă ăii ol-tau lenye. Nĕji eidipi anaa 'n-gishu: meitŏki ol-tau apiu.

When a man is on the point of death, people say he is about to cut his heart; and when he dies and is eaten (by hyenas), his soul dies with him. It is believed that all is over as with the cattle, and that the soul does not come to life again[4]. [763]

Kake ten ĕă ol-oiboni araki ol-karsis, nenukari, ore pe eñgwĕyu o-sesen lenye, nĕji etawale ol-tau lenye, etaa ol-asurai; nelo ol-asurai eng-añg oo-'n-gera enyena, neiñgurua.

But when a medicine-man or a rich person dies and is buried, his soul turns into a snake as soon as his body rots; and the snake goes to his children's kraal to look after them. 766 775 825

Ti-araki naa nĕja, pe mĕar il-Maasae 'l-asuria lenye. Naa, ten edol i-ñgorŏyok ol-asurai ti-aji, nesuaki kulle, nemej ol-asurai, nelo.

The Masai in consequence do not kill their sacred snakes, and if a woman sees one in her hut, she pours some milk on the ground for it to lick, after which it will go away. 778 825

Etii 'l-asuria oorook, naa le-'n-giabŏmi oo-'l-Aiser; naa, ten ĕar likae etii 'l-oopeny, nĕjo: 'Miar, amu 'l-kulalañg.'

There is a black snake, which is sacred to the Aiser clan; and if a person of another clan were to strike the snake whilst the owners were present, they would tell him to desist as it belongs to them. [614]

[1] The Dinka, Bari, and other Nilotic tribes follow similar customs (Kaufmann, *Schilderungen*, pp. 130, 192; and *Emin Pasha in Central Africa*, p. 238, &c.). [791]

[2] Ol-tau, the heart, mind, soul; ol-menañgani, the corpse, spirit, ghost. [792]

[3] The Dinka, Bari, Latuka, and other Nilotic tribes, also pay reverence to snakes (Kaufmann, *loc. cit.*, pp. 127, 188; Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, vol. i, p. 55; Casati, *Ten Years*, p. 31; *Emin Pasha*, *loc. cit.*, p. 239, &c.). The Zulus hold that divine ancestral shades are embodied in certain tame and harmless snakes, whom their human kinsfolk receive with kindly respect and propitiate with food (Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii, pp. 8, 233). [791]

[4] The Dinka and Bari likewise disbelieve in a life after death (Kaufmann, *loc. cit.*, pp. 124, 188).

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
FL12 Masai FL12

778 825 Eata sii en-gishōmi naji 'l-Tarōsero 'l-asuria lenye sambu. Naa, ten ŧarare ol-tuñgani loo-'l-Tarōsero ol-likae, pe meitōu, ŋsipot 'l-asuria lenyena, nōjo: 'E-sile e-'ng-aji e-yēyo, talakunye!' Naa, ten eitu ekwet lidoōarare, nepwōou, 'l-asuria saony.

The Tarosero family have their own particular snakes, which are of many hues; and when a member of this family fights with some one and gets the worst of the combat, he calls upon his snakes, and says: 'The avengers of my mother's house, come out!' If the man with whom he is fighting does not run away, the snakes will come and bite him.

[614] Eata sii kulye-abomito 'l-asuria lenye. Etii 'l-asuria coibor, netii 'l-oonyokyo, netii sii 'l-oonyori. Etii 'l-kulikae oota en-dōki natii e-murt anaa ol-kila lo-'l-móruo, neibor kulikae 'l-lughuny anaa ol-móruo kitok.

The other clans and families have their sacred snakes as well. Some are white in colour, others red, and others green. Some have a hood like an old-man's cloak, others again have white heads like very old people.

[791] Éji sii eata 'l-oibonok 'l-kulenyena ootii ol-bene.

The medicine-men are also said to have snakes, which they keep in their bags.

766 775 791 Nōji ten ōā kulikae-tuñganak kitunak anaa 'M-Batyany, ore pe enukari, nepwo 'l-tauja lenye eng-ai.

It is believed that the souls of some big people like Mbatian[1] go to heaven after death and burial.

794 828 Ten eirura ol-tuñgani, nemetŋaki likae-tuñgani ainyēye. Einyēye akiti, amu éji: 'Ebaiki meidim ol-tau lenye atorinyunye, nēā.'

A sleeping man must not be awakened suddenly. He must be roused gently, for it is thought that his soul may perhaps not return and he will die.

795 825 Éjo 'l-Maasae metii 'l-menetīga, amu medol; kake éji edol in-gishu, naa ten eitīgurua 'n-gishu pōkin e-wōji nēbo, nōji edol il-menetīga araki ol-ōwaru.

The Masai say there are no such things as ghosts because they do not see them. But it is supposed that cattle see them, and when a herd of cattle all gaze at one spot, they are said to be looking at either a ghost or a beast of prey.

[1] *Vide* p. 306.

11: Leakey E-5 (no date) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
Kenya

death taking place within the village. This means that as soon as a young or middle-aged person shows any signs of approaching death, he (or she) is hastily carried out into the bush outside the village and left to die there. 761 [763]

Should the death of a young or middle-aged person occur within the village the body must be carried out and thrown into the bush. The proper person to perform this last service is a son of the deceased, but if no son is available the body must be moved by a stranger (usually a member of the Wandorobo tribe, who is always willing to perform this work), and the fee for doing so is a heifer. The village must be moved as soon as possible after such an occurrence, but otherwise there is no purification ceremony. 764 [563]

Burial of Old People.—Only an old man, or a woman past child-bearing, is allowed to die peacefully in a hut in the village, and the body is then buried in the following way:—As soon as death occurs a ram or bullock is slaughtered and the fat used to anoint the body and clothes (sewn skins) of the individual. All ornaments are removed, and the burying-place is then prepared as follows: A spot in the bush not far from the village is selected and cleared and a hollow square of rough logs is then built up. This structure is usually about four feet square and three feet high. On the ground inside the structure the deceased's sleeping-skin is placed, and on it the body is laid (with the knees sufficiently bent to fit the space). Men are placed lying on their right sides, women on their left. The body is then covered by the various skin dresses owned by the deceased and left, no attempt being made to cover over the top of the structure with wood or earth in order to protect the body from scavenging animals. 766

About a month after the burial has taken place the village must be moved, with the exception of the hut in which the death took place. The hut is left to fall into ruin. Meanwhile, until the move takes place, any other occupants of the hut continue to live in it as before. 768

Ceremony at the Burial-place.—On the day that the village is finally abandoned every member of the village must file past the burial-place and the older people stop and drink beer and slaughter an ox there. My informants, however, insist that this is not a sacrifice to the departed spirit as among some other tribes, and as proof pointed out that they did not pour out any beer at the grave or leave any offering of meat. 769

Inheritance.—A man's possessions all pass to his male children, but if they are too young to take charge of them themselves the deceased's own brother, who acts *in loco parentis* (*see* Widowhood) looks after the property for them. In return for this he is allowed to retain a very small percentage of the stock. 428

A man's personal ornaments are put on his various children about two months after his death, with a certain amount of ceremonial and much beer-drinking. His weapons are kept for his sons until such time as they shall require them.

12: Fox G-5 (1925-1930) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
Kenya

Marriage.—The warriors may not marry till after the *E-Unoto*, and do not usually do so till after their first *Ol-Ng'esher*. The case stated by Mr. Leakey,[1] in which a warrior cannot have sexual intercourse with his initiated wife, is therefore hypothetical, and does not occur in practice.

The cattle required for the bride-price are payable on the birth of the first child, and cannot be reclaimed if the wife dies or runs away, because the husband has got the child. Wives live with their husbands, but they are common to their husband's generation, not his own exclusively. Thus if a stranger comes to a village where lives a man of his generation he may choose in which hut belonging to his generation he will sleep. When it is time to sleep it is the custom for the owner of the hut to vacate it and leave the stranger with his wife. It is quite lawful and proper for the stranger to have sexual intercourse with the woman provided that she consents and that the restrictions (*see* p. 202) are observed. It is said that if a woman is persistently unwilling to allow the members of her husband's generation to have intercourse with her she may be severely admonished, and her husband may be fined a number of cattle.

On the other hand, the members of one generation are extremely jealous of generations older or younger than themselves. A fight between generations is very likely to occur if the men of one generation find that a man of another has had intercourse with one of their women.

If a woman who has borne children leaves her husband and lives apart from him, he waits till his eldest son is old enough, and then sends him to fetch her back.

A man may not have sexual intercourse with the wife of his full brother (mother's son), but may have it with the wife of a half-brother (same father, different mother) who is of his generation. He may not have intercourse with his wife's sister or half-sister.

A husband and wife may not call each other by their names.

Father-in-law
Mother-in-law
Son-in-law
Daughter-in-law
} Must not be addressed by name.

Family.—The name for a family is *Ol Marei*. Relationship is not recognized beyond first cousin. The Masai take little interest in their genealogies and can seldom trace their ancestry beyond the fourth generation. Nevertheless, if a man is of pure Masai descent, *Ol Masaini oinoti*, he is proud of the fact.

Death and Burial.—Dead bodies are disposed of by the hyænas, except for those of *Laibons* or very influential old men. These are buried under cairns of stones.

[1] *See* p. 200 of this volume.

/201 cont./ Later, upon passing
764 the place, one again throws a stone or a handful of grass on that spot
[765] where the dead lay. The more respected he was, the longer this custom expressing veneration is continued.

[787] If the laid-out corpse is immediately devoured the first night by hyenas, this is regarded as a sign from 'Ng ai, at whose command the animals act here, that the deceased was a good human being.
[782] On the other hand, if one finds the corpse still untouched the next morning, the survivors bring a black ram as a sacrifice to appease the wrathful god. No prayer is spoken in this connection.

765 After the obsequies, a funeral banquet takes place, at which the animal whose fat served to anoint the deceased person is consumed. Everyone is welcome to take part. Formal mourning is observed only after the death of adult male persons. The period of mourning does not begin until one or more months after the death, and, to be sure, with the survivors shaving their heads (1)

1. Cf. the passage Micha /Micah/ 1, 16 (from the time around 724 B.C.) and Jer. 7, 23 /sic; see 7, 29/ (from the time around 605 B.C.).

--and the principal widow also cuts her nails -- and ends as soon as the hair has grown back about an inch long. /202/ The mourners remove all ornaments, for which the women also unwind the wire spirals from their necks and the wire cuffs from arms and legs; they do not take part in any feast or dance and may not marry during the period of mourning. For the death of a warrior his fellow comrades and fellow section-members, as well as his brothers and half brothers, mourn by shaving their heads and removing their ornaments.

• 766 In contrast to the simple exposure of the corpse, that of a chief
[791] (ol oiboni), of a married man of the El kiboron lineage, and often
[613] also that of a sorcerer (ol goiatiki) is buried. The bottom of a pit
[764] a meter deep is covered with a neat's hide moistened with fat, and
[237] upon this the corpse is laid in the position described above. A second neat's skin, likewise rubbed in fat, is then spread over the corpse. Now the pit is filled with stones and earth and the latter

/202 cont./

766 [791] [613] [769] [778] stamped down firmly so that hyenas will not be able to dig up the grave. The chief's grave, as well as often the graves of the El kiboron old men, are crowned with a larger or smaller stone mound. Later, as a sign of veneration for the dead, Masai passing by will throw a few bunches of grass on the latter, whereas on the former, which is regarded as sacred, they from time to time pour a little milk as an offering.

766 791 Concerning the burial of Mbatyan, his son Zendeo told me the following: When the ol oiboni died, his large bodyguard was gathered around him, and immediately warriors set off in all directions, in order to bring the sad news to the kraals lying far from one another. From everywhere Masai came streaming in, the relatives of the deceased all appeared, down to the smallest infant. Every mourner brought a few fat-tailed sheep along, which, after a large herd was assembled, were slaughtered. Meanwhile the corpse had been laid out on a neat's skin. Beside this the closest relatives laid their leather aprons and others added theirs in a line ea. 100 paces long, the aprons being placed so that they formed a channel. Now the boiled-out fat was poured on the corpse and flowed along the channel. Then the body was buried, whereupon all the people brought grass and heaped a pile several meters high over the grave, which was then covered on the sides as well as on top with layered stones. In contrast to this description, there is a rumor circulating repeatedly among the people, according to which Mbatyan, several days before his death, in a state of mental derangement, is supposed to have secretly left the kraal at night and wandered about in the steppe, without the men of his guard, who had followed him, being able to find him. Then, when he was found on the fifth day, he was dead and his body already decomposed.

768 If in one kraal several young people or even children have died of some illness within a short time, it is abandoned, first because it is regarded as unlucky, but then also /203/ to enable the survivors to forget the sad event more easily. In such cases of death one can always observe deep sorrow among the relatives, whereas the death of old people, even own parents, is accepted more calmly. "The old ones are now resting, they sleep, their time has come."